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Wm Bronscombe

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ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS.

Once More to the Manger.

(Margaret E. Sangster, in the 'Christian Intelligencer.')

Once more to the manger,
At dawning of day,
With shepherd and stranger,
We're taking our way.
The angels above us
Are singing of Him,
The light of Whose face
Makes the sunshine look dim.

There's a star in the East,
It is golden and bright.
It is rifting the darkness,
And chasing the night

There are sheep on the hillside,
And, safe from the cold,
There's a wee little lamb
That a mother's arms hold.

O, star of the morning,
Still shine on our way,
Lead us to the Christ
By thy crystalline ray;
O angels of glory,
Still sing of the love,
That for saving the lost
Hath stooped down from above.

With shepherd and stranger
We follow the star,
To the Babe in the manger;
For here our hearts are.
Lo! Jesus is born,
And we joyfully sing,
'All honor and glory
To Jesus our King!'

The Christian ought diligently to study the Word of God, and square his way by it; not to walk at random, but to apply that rule to every step at home and abroad, and to be as careful to keep the beauty of his way unspotted as those women are of their faces and attire who are most studious of comeliness.—Leighton

Christmastide.

(Lillian F. Lewis, in the 'Church Evangelist.')

Before the stars the night's gloom flies,
The hosts hold carol in the skies,
Deliverance comes and bondage dies—
'Tis Christmastide!

What happy day the morn o'ersteals,
What gracious joy the spirit feels,
What holy hope Faith sings and seals—
At Christmastide!

How shall the heart but leap in praise,
The lip but voice its grateful lays,
In welcome of this day of days—
The Christmastide?

An Acceptable Offering.

A SKETCH FOR CHRISTMAS TIME.

(Mrs. Harriet A. Cheever, in the 'Christian Intelligencer.')

Mr. Grafton was bustling about with an air of being very much in earnest concerning certain things of which he was in quest. In and out of stores went the business man, making various purchases, none of which seemed in keeping with what would naturally be considered his personal wants.

At last he entered more deliberately his tailor's establishment, and after careful consultation emerged, having left an order for an expensive, luxurious overcoat, which was to be delivered at the house of Dr. Darling, the minister, two days before Christmas.

Christmas! Ah, that explains it. Mr. Grafton had of course been going about securing holiday gifts, and in each case they were to be delivered two days in advance of the day of good cheer.

Now it was not usual for Mr. Grafton thus to exert himself for the benefit and happiness of others. Not that he was either an unkind or a selfish man, but everything with him had been business, business! There had been no time for anything else; no respite, no vacations, no trips, no pleasant social ties, and no Christmas jollity.

And he had reaped his reward. There was money in the coffers, there were houses and lands, bonds and deeds, testifying to the fruitful outcome of years of unremitting devotion to one object. Yet, it was not a spirit of greed that had actuated him. No, let us do him justice. It simply seemed 'born in him' to love a business career. The effort, the excitement, the competition of a business life stimulated and attracted him, just as it does thousands of active, wideawake men.

But something had happened. Mr. Grafton had been obliged to pause in his headlong career, in his ardent chase after more and more of this world's goods. There had come an involuntary suspension of activity, a complete stand-still. A force not to be overleaped had sounded a grim 'thus far,' and then left him stranded.

Mr. Grafton had been ill, very ill. For the first time in his life he had faced the fact that it was not because of his own strength, that he had gone on unchecked from year to year, working out his will and wishes. He had vaguely known this. Now he realized it.

Some time before he was stricken down, Mr. Grafton had heard a sermon that just for the time being impressed him. He remembered that the text had been to the effect that men did not live to themselves, nor did they die to themselves, and the preacher pointed out that it was every man's duty who could do so, to help and benefit his fellow men.

During those days of helplessness and suffering, Mr. Grafton recalled that sermon, and, feeling oppressed with a sense of unworthiness and remissness, he made an attempt at prayer, the first time he had stopped to pray for years. And he promised that if God would drive away pain, and restore him to health he would try to act up to his duty, and consider the interests and needs of others.

Somewhere about the middle of autumn, Mr. Grafton was gradually getting back to his place in the business world. He did not forget this promise made at a time of stress and weakness.

Coal was sent to the janitor of the building in which he had his office. The man's wife had been sick and it was hard for him to meet necessary expenses. Jemmy was 'loud and long' in expressions of gratitude and encomiums of praise.

The city missionary who solicited aid in sending out Thanksgiving dinners to the poor, received a cheque which called down renewed blessings on Mr. Grafton's head. The newsboy who craved promotion to becoming a bootblack, was given help toward procuring the needed 'kit' which made him fairly writhe with joy.

Moreover, Mr. Grafton had taken to constant church going, not having forgotten a stinging sense of regret that had dogged him while lying ill, at not having been truer to his early training and continuing to go regularly to his church.

But—the strange part of these proceedings was that Mr. Grafton did not experience the relief and satisfaction from a bestowal of all these benefactions that he had expected. Instead, there was a kind of inward craving that he did not at all understand. And, thinking it all over one night, he concluded it might be that he had not yet done enough to atone for the years of indifference and neglect that could surely be laid to his account.

This was why, as Christmas approached, Mr. Grafton was sending gifts broadcast, and in his zeal was actually trying to think up cases where he could send needed aid and make people happy.

Yet, after all, the man was sorely puzzled. For sitting in his comfortable library on the Christmas eve, he faced again the old heart-craving, an inward demand for—what? He was perfectly honest in saying to himself, 'I surely fail to understand what more is required of me.'

But the soul that begins seeking after light and its own best progress, is never long left in doubt as to its greatest needs. Mr. Grafton was pondering the perplexing problem of unsatisfying results in the face of sincere and conscientious efforts when the door-bell rang, and Dr. Daring, the minister, was ushered in. As he faced his generous friend, there was an expression in the pastor's eyes that made Mr. Grafton say deprecatingly:

'Now, don't! don't say one word! I've only tried to serve myself, and do myself a favor in begging you would accept what I know you have in mind.'

'Oh, you can't get out of it on any such specious pleas as that,' laughed the minister, and giving his head a knowing turn. 'Why, my dear sir, I've sometimes wondered how it really would seem to have a great coat with a fur collar to turn up around one's ears of a piercing night; it has occurred to me a few times as a pleasing fancy too distant to materalize for the dominie; but lo! I find myself the possessor of so noble a fellow in the way of an overcoat, that I really fear it will take us some time to get thoroughly acquainted.'

Mr. Grafton listened to the minister's pleasantries with rather a sober face, and while the genial man in well-chosen words was expressing his gratitude and very sincere satisfaction at having been so generously remembered, Mr. Grafton suddenly resolved to lay his perplexities before the pastor, asking if he could suggest some further course of action.

Dr. Daring was immediately all attention, the instincts of the 'minister' leaping toward earnest desire to render any possible aid. But Mr. Grafton was a man of known business acumen, he surely could not need advice along commercial lines.

No, the next moment the good man was listening to a very outspoken state of affairs concerning another man's inner life; the struggle of a well-meaning but short-sighted man, who failed to recognize his own most vital obligations.

'My dear Mr. Grafton,' began Dr. Daring after hearing the whole story, 'you have made no mistake in kindly considering the claims of those about you, but the Lord Christ wants something more!'

'Oh, I intend to keep on giving,' said Mr. Grafton ingenuously. 'I derive decided pleasure from it; I only wonder if eventually it will not prove more satisfying.'

'Not until you give something different, a something far more precious in the Lord's sight than anything yet offered,' was the minister's uncompromising reply.

Mr. Grafton looked honestly puzzled. 'I fail to see what you mean,' he said. 'I think I'd be willing to give all there is of me to feel really at rest.'

'That is exactly what is wanted,' said Dr. Daring with a reassuring nod.

'What? All my property?'

'Oh, no, you did't say that! You said "all there is of me;" that is just what God wants. yourself! Give yourself to him, and see the joy and satisfaction that will encompass you as with a beautiful garment.'

At last Mr. Grafton understood. He grasped the pastor's hand at parting, saying he would think the matter out to the finish.

He did. And it had all become so simple! Sitting alone until midnight he resolved to do a man's whole duty to himself and to his God. Then it occurred to him that Christmas Day would be the best time in the world to make the offering to the dear Lord who had bought him. He felt his unworthiness, yet rejoiced to feel that he was precious to the dear Redeemer of men.

The next time he saw his pastor he said but a few words, but they made the good man's heart rejoice.

'I have made that other offering,' he said, 'and thanks be to our bounteous Father in Heaven, I found that it was an acceptable one.'

Yule-Log Chips.

Yule-log chips, like yule-tide gifts, never fulfil their mission unless they give a bright and cheery glow.

Do as you 'would be,' not as you 'are,' done by.

Christmas is meaningless unless it takes us out of ourselves, and makes us think and work for others.

Individual character never shows itself more plainly than in the making of gifts.

Casting bread upon the Christmas waters, with the expectation that it will return after few, or many, days, is contemptible; and making Christmas gifts that are a bargain with one's conscience is scarcely less so.

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BOYS AND GIRLS

Holly and Mistletoe.

I.

The Holly as a soldier roamed
The woodlands long ago,
And met beneath a spreading oak
The maiden Mistletoe.
He bore a sword and slender spear,
And wore a scarlet coat,
And she was in a mantle green
With pearls around her throat.

II.

The frozen flakes began to fall,
They hid the narrow track,
The happy lovers lost the way,
And nevermore came back.
And still through winter woods they stray
Together in the snow,
The soldier Holly and his bride,
The pearl-decked Mistletoe.

—'Illustrated Bits.'

A Notable Scene From a Notable Book

BOB CRATCHIT'S CHRISTMAS PARTY.

(One great Christmas story stands out in our English literature, and holds its own against newcomers, and that is Charles Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol.' There are some elderly gentlemen who tell us that in the midst of the Christmas gaieties of to-day they never fail to retire to some quiet corner on the twenty-fifth of December, and read the inimitable 'carol' over again. There are few pictures more touched by the Christmas spirit than this homely party scene, or more suitable for reading aloud by the Christmas fireside.)

Then up rose Mrs. Cratchit, Cratchit's wife, dressed out but poorly in a twice-turned gown, but brave in ribbons, which are cheap and make a goodly show for sixpence; and she laid the cloth, assisted by Belinda Cratchit, second of her daughters, also brave in ribbons; while Master Peter Cratchit plunged a folk into the saucepan of potatoes, and getting the corners of his monstrous shirtcollar (Bob's private property, conferred upon his son and heir in honor of the day) into his mouth, rejoiced to find himself so gallantly attired, and he yearned to show his linen in the fashionable parks. And now two smaller Cratchits, boy and girl, came tearing in, screaming that outside the baker's they had smelt the goose, and known it for their own; and basking in luxurious thoughts of sage and onion, these young Cratchits danced about the table, and exalted Master Peter Cratchit to the skies, while he (not proud, although his collar nearly choked him) blew the fire, until the slow potatoes bubbling up, knocked loudly at the saucepan lid to be let out and peeled.

'What has ever got your precious father then?' said Mrs. Cratchit. 'And your brother, Tiny Tim! And Martha warn't as late last Christmas Day by half-an-hour!'

'Here's Martha, mother!' said a girl, appearing as she spoke.

'Here's Martha, mother!' cried the two young Cratchits. 'Hurrah! There's such a goose, Martha!'

'Why, bless your heart alive, my dear, how late you are!' said Mrs. Cratchit, kissing her a dozen times, and taking off her shawl and bonnet for her with officious zeal.

'We'd a deal of work to finish up last night,' replied the girl, 'and had to clear away this morning, mother!'

'Well! Never mind so long as you are come,' said Mrs. Cratchit. 'Sit ye down before the fire, my dear, and have a warm, bless ye!'

'No, no! There's father coming,' cried the two young Cratchits, who were everywhere at once. 'Hide, Martha, hide!'

So Martha hid herself, and in came little Bob, the father, with at least three feet of comforter exclusive of the fringe hanging right down before him; and his threadbare clothes darned up and brushed, to look seasonable; and Tiny Tim upon his shoulder. Alas for Tiny Tim, he bore a little crutch, and had his limbs supported by an iron frame!

'Why, where's our Martha?' cried Bob Cratchit, looking round.

'Not coming,' said Mrs. Cratchit.

'Not coming!' said Bob, with a sudden declension in his high spirits; for he had been Tom's blood horse all the way from church, and had come home rampant. 'Not coming upon Christmas Day!'

Martha didn't like to see him disappointed, if it were only in joke; so she came out prematurely from behind the closet door, and ran into his arms, while the two young Cratchits hustled Tiny Tim, and bore him off into the washhouse, that he might hear the pudding singing in the copper.

'And how did little Tim behave?' asked Mrs. Cratchit, when she had rallied Bob on his credulity, and Bob had hugged his daughter to his heart's content.

'As good as gold,' said Bob, 'and better. Somehow he gets thoughtful, sitting by himself so much, and thinks the strangest things you ever heard. He told me, coming home, that he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember upon Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk and blind men see.'

Bob's voice was tremulous when he told them this, and trembled more when he said that Tiny Tim was growing strong and so hearty.

His active little crutch was heard upon the floor, and back came Tiny Tim before another word was spoken, escorted by his brother and sister to his stool beside the fire; and while Bob, turning up his cuffs—as if, poor fellow, they were capable of being made more shabby—compounded some hot mixture in a jug with lemons, and stirred it round and round and put it on the hob to simmer; Master Peter and the two ubiquitous young Cratchits went to fetch the goose, with which they soon returned in high procession.

Such a bustle ensued that you might have thought a goose the rarest of all birds; a feathered phenomenon, to which a black swan was a matter of course—and in truth it was something very like it in that house. Mrs. Cratchit made the gravy (ready beforehand in a little saucepan) hissing hot; Master Peter mashed the potatoes with incredible vigor; Miss Belinda sweetened up the apple-sauce; Martha dusted the hot plates; Bob took Tiny Tim beside him in a tiny corner at the table; the two young Cratchits set chairs for everybody, not forgetting themselves, and, mounting guard upon their posts, crammed spoons into their mouths, lest they should shriek for goose before their turn came to be helped. At last the dishes were set on, and grace was said. It was succeeded by a breathless pause, as Mrs. Cratchit, looking slowly all along the carving-knife, prepared to plunge it in the breast; but when she did, and when the long expected gush of stuffing issued forth, one murmur of delight arose all round the board, and even Tiny Tim, excited by the two Cratchits, beat on the table with the handle of his knife, and feebly cried Hurrah!

There never was such a goose. Bob said he didn't believe there ever was such a goose cooked. Its tenderness and flavor, size and cheapness, were the themes of universal admiration. Eked out by apple-sauce and mashed potatoes, it was a sufficient dinner for the whole family; indeed, as Mrs. Cratchit said with great delight (surveying one small atom of a bone upon the dish), they hadn't ate it all at last! Yet every one had had enough, and the youngest Cratchits in particular, were steeped in sage and onion to the eyebrows! But now, the plates being changed by Miss Belinda, Mrs. Cratchit left the room alone—too nervous to bear witness—to take the pudding up and bring it in.

Suppose it should not be done enough! Suppose it should break in turning out! Suppose somebody should have got over the wall of the back-yard, and stolen it, while they were merry with the goose—a supposition at which the two young Cratchits became livid! All sorts of horrors were supposed.

Hallo! A great deal of steam! The pudding was out of the copper. A smell like a washing-day! That was the cloth. A smell like an eating-house and a pastry-cook's next door to each other, with a laundress's next door to that! That was the pudding! In half a minute Mrs. Cratchit entered—flushed, but smiling proudly—with the pudding, like a speckled cannon-ball, so hard and firm, . . . and bedight with Christmas holly stuck into the top.

Oh, a wonderful pudding! Bob Cratchit said,

and calmly too, that he regarded it as the greatest success achieved by Mrs. Cratchit since their marriage. Mrs. Cratchit said that now the weight was off her mind, she would confess she had had her doubts about the quantity of flour. Everybody had something to say about it, but nobody said or thought it was at all a small pudding for a large family. It would have been flat heresy to do so. Any Cratchit would have blushed to hint at such a thing. . . .

After dinner Bob proposed:

'Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us!'

Which all the family re-echoed.

'God bless us every one!' said Tiny Tim, last of all.

He sat very close to his father's side, upon his little stool. Bob held his withered little hand in his, as if he loved the child, and he wished to keep him by his side, and dreaded that it might be taken from him.

They were not a handsome family; they were not well dressed; their shoes were far from being waterproof; their clothes were scanty; and Peter might have known, and very likely did, the inside of a pawnbroker's. But, they were happy, grateful, pleased with one another, and contented with their lot in life.

The Christmas Tree.

NOTES ABOUT ITS ORIGIN.

A pretty story by Henry Vandyke, published a few years ago, places the origin of the Christmas tree in the year 722. Winfried, or Boniface, otherwise known as the apostle of Germany, was great as scholar, preacher and traveller, but forsook the haunts of men to penetrate the remotest wilds, proclaiming the Gospel to the heathen. On one of these journeys he came on a vast multitude gathered round the thunder oak, before which fire had been kindled in honor of the god Thor. They were about to sacrifice a young child, an old priest, Hunrad, explaining that by doing so they hoped to propitiate the god of thunder.

Boniface struck aside the weapon descending on the innocent victim, sprung on the sacred altar, called on his few followers for aid, and led them in chopping down the oak, crying—'Tree god, art thou angry? Thus we smite thee!' When the oak was down he drew the attentin of the awe-struck multitude to a young fir, bidding them carry it to the chieftain's hall, and proclaiming that no more should they seek the shadows of the forest, but at home with rites of love should make merry, and that the time was coming when all children in Germany should gather round the fir, rejoicing over the birth of Christ.

Notwithstanding the legend, many will be surprised to be told that the Christmas tree is so recent a thing that it was unknown outside of Germany, and by no means common there, at a time within the memory of men now living. Yet such is the fact.

WHEN IT CAME TO BRITAIN.

Princess Helen of Orleans introduced it into France in 1840, and it came to England with the Prince Consort at about the same time. In Hungary it appeared ten years earlier, but its use is still confined to the German-speaking bourgeoisie and the Magyar nobility.

To all these countries, and to Holland, Sweden, Russia and Italy, the Christmas tree came from Germany. In Russia it is not common even yet, being seen only in the houses of the aristocracy in Moscow and St. Petersburg. In Germany and among Germans the world over the Christmas tree is now almost universal.

There is no doubt of the Christmas tree's German origin, but the precise place and time of its appearance were until recently involved in much obscurity, which is not yet entirely dispelled.

Christmas trees were apparently sold for the first time in 1807. But at this time they were quite common in North Germany. They were known in Holland in 1796.

At present in Sweden the Christmas tree is regarded as an importation from Germany. Christmas trees, properly so called, were not known in Sweden as late as the beginning of this century, although it was customary to erect pines and firs before the houses, and Christmas trees were common on some of the Swedish islands.

The net result of the records at hand seems to be that the Christmas tree was in use in Strasburg and its vicinity in 1600, or earlier, and that the custom did not spread much until about 1730.—'Christian World.'

'It Came Upon the Midnight Clear.'

(We shall never tire of reading nor yet of singing this magnificent hymn. It will go down through the ages until the coming of the millennium.)

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth,
To touch their harps of gold:
'Peace on the earth, good-will to men,
From heaven's all-gracious King.'
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaceful wings unfurled;
And still their heavenly music floats
O'er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing,
And ever o'er its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.

With all the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long;
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;
And man, at war with man, hears not
The love song which they bring:
Oh, hush the noise, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing!

And ye, beneath life's crushing load
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way,
With painful steps and slow,—
Look now; for glad and golden hours
Come swiftly on the wing;
Oh, rest beside the weary road
And hear the angels sing!

—Edmund Hamilton Sears.

The Crimson Footstep.

A CHRISTMAS LEGEND.

(F. Burrill Graves, in 'Golden Rule.')

Once upon a time, in the heart of a great forest, on the border of a beautiful lake, lived an old man with his orphaned grandson. It matters not when or where.

Little Jamie was an invalid; he was hunchbacked, and his limbs were withered. But his grandfather loved him very much. It grieved him greatly that the lad could not go with him into the forest to cut wood or on the lake to fish.

Their life for the most part was lonely; but every Christmas, at least, they enjoyed a special feast of such good things as the meagre means of the grandfather could purchase in the town, which was miles away through the wilderness.

The winter of that year was very severe. But the old man, the day before Christmas, taking an empty sack and his walking-stick, set out for the town long before light, leaving Jamie to watch the cabin and keep the fire blazing in the big fireplace. It was intensely cold, and the wind roared huskily through the throat of the chimney that there would be a storm before sunset. The lad hitched about the floor as best he could, doing what he thought grandfather had neglected to do. He brought the wood, stick by stick, and piled it up near the fireplace. Then he dragged up an old settle, and spread on the floor in front of it a mat made of otter skins. The door was shut and the windows closed, but the cold air still sifted in through the crevices in the cabin.

When the old man reached the town, he rested a while at the inn, and then started out again. Notwithstanding the extreme cold, the streets were filled with people. Groups of children, too, could be seen looking into the store windows, each pointing out what he or she wished for Christmas. The old man would sometimes pause and look, wishing that he might get this or that for Jamie, for whose sake he felt it his duty to envy the merry, healthy children in warm furs and mittens.

It was afternoon before he started homeward, his sack well filled and thrown over his shoulders. He was cheery, and hummed some familiar melodies as he walked along. The desolation was very depressing after he had got well out of the town, for it had now grown dusky, and tiny flakes of snow began to fall. But he knew the way, and had no fear. Presently the storm increased, and the flakes fell so fast and thick that it seemed as if white sheets were let down out of the sky. The old man ceased his humming, and began to whistle as he trudged along. Then thoughts of Jamie alone in the cabin made him quicken his steps.

As he skirted the edge of the lake, he suddenly came upon a young man standing for shelter beside a fir-tree whose graceful limbs were already drooping under the burden of snow. He said to the old man as he came along and dropped his sack for a moment, 'Friend, I have lost my way in this blinding storm, but am anxious to reach the town before nightfall.' His face was fair and beautiful, and his voice fascinating and sweet; and, though he was somewhat scantily clad for such bitter weather, he did not seem to suffer from the cold.

The snow blew in their faces, and was fast covering the sack of the old man. Lifting it again on his shoulder, he said to the young man: 'It is far to the town, and surely in such a storm as this you could not find it. Will you not come with me to my cabin, which stands just at the end of this path? We must hasten, or the night will overtake us.'

Noiselessly in the deep wilderness they both hurried along, brushing the bushes as they passed. Soon a streak of yellow light streamed directly across the path.

'That is my home,' joyfully exclaimed the old man; 'and, though very humble, dear it is to me and the little lad in it.' As he pushed open the door, he added, 'You are cordially welcome, stranger, to such as I can give you.'

Jamie was sitting on the mat of otter skins, his withered limbs spread out and his back resting wearily against the settle.

'Oh, I'm so glad you've come, grandpa!' he cried, as the door swung open.

'I've brought you lots of good things, Jamie.'

He shook the snow from the sack, and threw it at the boy's feet. 'Here is a stranger, also, who seeks our hospitality.'

He said this as if asking for Jamie's consent, and as if the stranger were one of the good things that had been brought. The boy's thin face and sunken eyes gave him a look of almost inexpressible interest, which the stranger returned as he took a seat on the end of the settle.

When the supper was laid on the rude table, and the three sat down, the stranger said, Shall we not thank our Father?' He put a strange emphasis on the last two words, very noticeable to the old man and Jamie. He bowed his head, and they felt constrained to do the same. Then he uttered a few simple words of thanksgiving.

They listened to the roaring of the storm, which had increased in violence. The trees cracked and moaned, and those near the cabin swept it with their branches. Presently the young man, turning to Jamie, said: 'And are you contented, my lad, to live here alone with your grandfather, and never go out into the great forest?'

'Oh, yes, sir; grandpa is so good to me; and then sometime I shall go out of the cabin and be buried in the forest, where I can hear the birds sing in summer, and be warmly covered with the snow in winter.'

Tears came into the old man's eyes, and trickled down his cheeks.

'But would it not be delightful,' said the stranger, 'if you could now walk among all the trees in the happy summer days, and also trudge through the snow in winter?'

'Indeed it would sir; but I cannot with my poor, withered limbs.' His lip quivered with the emotion he tried hard to conceal. 'It is best to be thankful for what I have,' he added, 'as you told us when you blessed the supper.' The old man was astonished to hear Jamie.

'Yes, thankkfulness is right, my child. But you shall go into the forest. Your songs and laughter shall echo in its depths. The birds shall sing, and the trees whisper to you. I will make your withered limbs whole.'

He spoke so confidently that the old man thought he must be some physician of greater skill than he had ever known. How could the boy's back be made straight? How could his withered limbs be made whole? Were ever such things done except in Palestine by the Master? But Jamie was more incredulous still. He looked at his withered hand as it lay on the table, and felt his back against the back of the chair. He recalled the long years of suffering he had endured. And yet when he smoothed his long, flowing locks, he felt a rather strange sensation of hope.

'Grandpa is good and learned,' he thought to himself; 'and he has taught me much of all that he knows, but this man is strange.'

'Oh, sir, when will it be?' he quavered aloud. 'I shall be so glad if I can walk as grandpa does, even with a walking-stock.'

'Neither stick nor staff shall you need, my lad. You said that sometime you should sleep in the forest. Think you that?'

Jamie looked at his grandfather, who sat silent, gazing wistfully into the stranger's face.

'Why, sir,' said Jamie, 'grandpa says that sometime we shall be buried side by side in the forest, and that we shall live again, and that I shall then have no poor, hunched back and withered limbs. Just in what way we shall come to live again, he cannot tell me; but I believe grandpa.'

He said this slowly between sobs; and the stranger waited patiently until he had finished. Finally he said: 'I will tell you in what way. The Master said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." And he knew, for he was buried, although not in a forest like this, my lad; and he rose again. So shall you and grandpa.'

'I wish I knew more of the Master,' exclaimed Jamie; 'for he could tell me so many things. And if I walk, sir, through the forest or to the town, can I not find him?'

'To find him,' replied the stranger, 'you need not walk. He will come to you; and now that you have invited him, you may expect him.' He smiled sweetly as he spoke.

The wind outside continued to wail among the tops of the pines, and beat in fitful gusts against the cabin. The ice on the lake cracked with a loud noise in the keen cold. The old man barred the heavy door, threw a fresh log on the fire, which for a moment burst into a bright flame. Then he took a light, and invited the stranger into the only other room in the cabin. Within the room was absolutely nothing but a bed of savory pine-needles.

As the stranger arose, he said pleasantly, 'Shall we not ask for our Father's care while we sleep?' He knelt down by the side of Jamie's chair, and in plain and unpretending phrase he besought God's care.

Ae he lay upon his bed, Jamie could not get out of his mind the promise the stranger made that, without any deformity whatever, he should walk some day. 'He meant after I die,' he thought, and fell asleep.

The morning soon came. It was still cold, though the wind had subsided. Just before dawn the old man arose. The cabin was still save for the slow breathing of Jamie. The old man busied himself a while in the half-darkness. He unbarred the door, and, looking out, saw the stars still glowing through the white tree-tops. Passing by the room where he had put the stranger, he saw that it was empty; indeed, the bed had not been disturbed. He was astounded and disappointed. Stirring the fire, he sat down before it, going over in his mind afresh all that the stranger had said. Suddenly he was startled from his reverie by hearing Jamie cry out, 'Oh, grandpa, grandpa!'

As he hurried across the cabin to discover the cause of Jamie's exclamation, the lad leaped out of bed and rushed into his arms. Before the old man could express his amazement, Jamie dropped to the floor and ran joyously about. The old man rubbed the moisture out of his eyes, through whose mist he thought he was surely deceived.

When Jamie had grown somewhat calm, he cried out, 'Grandpa, where is he?'

''Sh!' the old man said; 'he is gone. The room is empty.'

Jamie went to look for himself, and then he came and sat on his grandfather's knee, laying his head on the old man's shoulder. Then he asked again, as if he expected the old man to answer, 'Where has he gone?'

'I cannot tell you, lad,' he replied. 'It was a terrible night for him to go out in. We will go to town to-day and see whether we cannot find him.' How strange and sweet those words sounded to both of them, they only knew. 'Would you like to go, Jamie?' the old man asked.

'Oh, yes, grandpa; but I want to find him.' He raised his head from the old man's shoulder, and looked into his face. 'I know he came to me last night,' he added, 'when I was fast asleep, and laid his hand on my forehead. I know it was he; for I saw the lovely face, and flowing, bright hair, and kindly eyes. As he touched me, he whispered, "Jamie, dear, you shall walk to-morrow."' Jamie laid his head again on the old man's shoulder, and broke into sobs.

The yellow sun rising over the tree-tops pierced the cabin with its rays, and they knew it was fully morning. Together they walked, hand in hand, to the door. They saw in the cold, white, glittering snow, footsteps departing from the cabin door, on each one of which was a large crimson spot. They understood then who the stranger was.

Christmas on Crusoe's Island

One Christmas morning not many years ago I found myself up a tree in Crusoe's island. I was hunting meat for my Christmas dinner shortly after daybreak that morning, and as the most abundant supply was promised by the peccaries, or wild hogs, that ranged the island, I had left camp and started out after them. It was great fun for a while, for I fell in with a herd of about a dozen and had secured two of the 'varmints' when the survivors, seeming to think that 'turn about is fair play,' began hunting me. . . . Fortunately for me, a great gum tree stood conveniently near, and by means of the lianas that swung from its branches I was soon safe from harm and looking calmly down upon the little black beasts as they raged around the trunk. . . . I had only a few rounds of ammunition suited to their needs, but I killed three more before it was exhausted, and peppered the hides of several others. The limbs I sat astride of were not so soft as they might have been if they had been made to order, and I was getting uncomfortable when I noticed a commotion in the herd. The leader of the band, a grisly old tusker with recurved fangs like Turkish scimiters, suddenly stood up and sniffed the air; then he uttered a 'whoof' of rage and despair, struck a 2.10 gait and disappeared in the jungle, followed by all the survivors. I was saved by a black man and a dog. . . .

The man who appeared at this juncture was the only other in that forest save myself, my sable servitor, Pappy Ned. He had been out all night hunting crapauds, or forest frogs, and was on his way back to our camp with a backload of batrachians, the legs of which were to be served up in a style which only Pappy Ned knew to perfection.

'It's yo', massa!' he exclaimed in astonishment. 'Was dat yo' gun goin' off pam! pam! lak yo' shootin' a reg'munt ob sogers? Ki, but it's lucky ole Pappy Ned come 'long, hey? Dem hawgs done know Pappy Ned an' jes' cl'ar out when dey hear um a'comin' along wiv dis yer dawg.' . . .

'You came along just in the nick of time, old friend, and I owe you another reward for saving my life a second time.' He had nursed me through a fever a few months before. . . .

'Oh, me, massa, dat ain' nuffin'.'

Pappy Ned set to work dressing (or, to be exact, undressing) the peccaries, being careful not to taint the flesh with the contents of the peculiar musk gland which the species carries on its back, and while he is thus engaged seems a good opportunity for me to make my explanation as to the exact location of Crusoe's island.

It is not, as ninety-nine persons in a hundred think, the island of Juan Fernandez, on the south-west coast of South America, but it is a good many miles nearer the coast of the United States, in the south-eastern part of the Caribbean sea. I will not waste any time, either the reader's or my own, in argument, but respectfully refer the earnest inquirer to old Crusoe himself. Robinson Crusoe, Esq., mariner, of Bristol, England, whose adventures

were first written out and published by Daniel De Foe in 1719, was somewhere in latitude 11 degrees north of the equator when he was shipwrecked—that is, of course, assuming there ever was an entity called 'Crusoe' in the flesh. But, whether he ever existed or not, that is where De Foe placed his hero when he had him wrecked on the coast of his island. To quote the words of Crusoe himself, just before it happened, 'The master made an observation as well as he could and found that he was in about 11 degrees of north latitude, so that we were gotten beyond the coast of Guiana and beyond the river Amazones, toward the Orinoco, commonly called the Great river.'

Now, that would be evidence sufficient for any sailor, but let Crusoe further explain, as he does well along in his narrative, when he first circumnavigates his island kingdom: 'The land which I perceived to the west and southwest was the great island of Trinidad, on the north point of the mouth of the river Orinoco.'

Trinidad, as everybody knows, is off the north coast of South America and is one of the finest British possessions in the West Indies. The only other island which fully answers the description given by Crusoe in relation of location to Trinidad is that of Tobago, from which Sir Walter Raleigh probably derived the name of the 'weed' we call tobacco.

. . . .

Pappy Ned soon finished skinning those peccaries, and was ready to go with me to our hut. . . . There never was a more beautiful situation for a hut than the site of mine on a hilltop above the forest line, with views of tropical woods and shining shore, and, as the weather that Christmas day was simply perfect, I ordered my man to make our 'spread' in the open, beneath the cocoa palms, sheltered from the blazing sun by the golden roof-trees only. So he set the table out of doors and lost no time in getting at the cooking, which was done over an open fire. Pappy Ned was as adept at preparing exquisite dishes from next to nothing as any Parisian chef that ever lived. We had a garden filled with such plants as the manioc, tania, sweet potato, arrowroot, yam, etc., not to mention corn and mountain rice. From a wild grove of coffee trees I obtained the fragrant berry for my own morning beverage; also cacao, or chocolate, from anther copse on the border of the forest, while the cocoa palms above and around my hut held a delicious cool drink in their unripe nuts. Pappy Ned dried and grated the sassava tubers, making 'farine,' from which he cooked great cakes more than a foot across. The juice of the saccava is poisonous in its crude state, but it is converted into a palatable substance by heat and forms the basis of the noted 'cassareep,' or pepper pot. We always had a pepper on hand as a standby, into which we threw the odd pieces of meat left over after ordinary repasts, and a goodly amount of the peccary flesh was thus disposed of, the cassareep acting as a preservative as well as condiment. . . . After working three or four hours over the open fire Pappy Ned came to announce, 'Dinnah done ready, sah.' . . .

The grand repast of the day opened with gumbo soup, followed by fish, frogs' legs and turtles' eggs, while in the centre of the table was peccary roast, flanked by a nicely browned guinea bird and a native wild turkey, with a vast assortment of vegetables from my garden. There were no drinks artificially cooled, ice being an unobtainable luxury in Crusoe's island, but there were tropical fruits in abundance—pines, guavas, mangoes, oranges and custard apples—all of which had been plucked within a stone's throw of my hut.—Jamaica 'Times.'

'Tu whit! Tu whoo-o,
Merry Christmas to you.'

Eventful Christmastides

OF HER LATE MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA.

Our late Queen, the beloved Victoria, enjoyed many happy Christmases in the course of her long and eventful life. She also spent some exceedingly sad ones.

It was on Christmas Day, seventy-three years ago, that the young Queen was first informed of the greatness that would one day be hers. 'Queen of England!' she repeated, meditatively. 'Queen of England! Well, I do not know that I am altogether glad to hear it. There is much splendor, but there is also much responsibility.'

On Christmas morning, 1838, the Queen first became engaged to Prince Albert; and twenty-three Christmases later she was left a lonely and almost heart-broken widow, the Prince Consort having been laid to rest on December 23rd, 1861.

The Christmas of 1891 was another sad season for Her Majesty. Her grandson, George, now Prince of Wales, was lying dangerously ill of typhoid fever, and just three weeks later his brother, the Duke of Clarence, died at Sandringham.

IN CONNECTION WITH INVENTORS.

Whether it be on account of the all-pervading good cheer, and the consequent brain stimulus that follows, or is supposed to follow, in its train, it is difficult to say; but, as a matter of fact, Christmastide has been a red-letter day in the life of more than one inventor. To cite only a few instances:—On Dec. 27, 1835, Samuel Morse put the finishing touches to his model of the 'recording electric telegraph;' and on the same day, more than half a century later, Thomas Alva Edison finally solved the problem of how to convey the human voice over a length of insulated wire, and the telephone came into being.

Similarly Stephenson, the elder, prepared the plan for his first locomotive in 1830, while on a Christmas visit to his friend and patron, Nicholas Wood, of Hetton. James Watt completed the original working model of his first steam engine, under similar circumstances, in 1761; and Sir Humphrey Davy has left it on record that, in all human probability, the safety lamp would not have been invented—at all events by him—had he not, out of pure curiosity, descended a coal mine near Wrexham, during Christmas week, in the year 1798.—'Alliance News.'

A Charming New Year's Gift.

When family reunions are the happy order of the day during the Christmas holiday season, there will be time for hatching all sorts of plots for giving pleasure to the dear ones in the old homestead from which the younger ones have long since scattered.

The following item, clipped from an exchange, will suggest one excellent plot, to be executed now or on the coming birthday, for a home made calendar can extend over any twelve months, if the makers choose to have it so:—

The four married children of a dear old lady contributed to a charming calendar for one of her Christmas presents, each family supplying three leaves. Photographs of the home,

interior views, portraits, pictures of the pet animals, all amateur photographs, but well taken and tastefully arranged, filled the pages. The winter months had winter pictures, and so on through the year. The leaves were heavy cardboard, about 6x12 inches in size, and were fastened together at the top with brass rings and holly red ribbon.

Trimming the Christmas Tree.

Less than $2, properly expended, will decorate the Christmas tree beautifully in a novel fashion, and give no end of pleasure.

The chief thing to consider is the color and effect. The materials employed are really secondary. There will, of course, be a cobwebby mass of loose silver tinsel coiled in and out and over the tree in a bewildering labyrinth, and strings of popcorn, holly berries and cranberries. Tradition demands their use in connection with the novel ornaments.

Small and inexpensive souvenirs of Japanese lanterns and opened parasols will give a unique touch of Oriental color to the Christmas tree. From every available tip tiny bells, hearts, stars, guitars, banjos and paper mache animals, such as rabbits, donkeys and reindeers, should be suspended.

If desired, the animals may be of cake, as moulds are made especially for this purpose. The stars and hearts may be cut from bristol board and given a coat of glue, then dipped in mica or metallic flock.

Small red and green apples may be used to good advantage for decorative purposes by just sticking them with tiny crepe paper flags. They should be suspended from the boughs by braids of red, white and blue paper.

Walnuts, hickorynuts, peanuts, pine cones, etc., will help the decorative scheme also, if they are gilded. The best thing to accomplish this result is smalt, which is kept by paint dealers and comes in gold and silver and all the metallic shades.

First, dissolve a cake of glue in boiling water, place a tack in the end of the nut or object to be immersed, dip in the liquid glue, roll in the smalt and dry. Later, when ready to suspend from the tree, attach bright red ribbon to the gilded tack and hang in some of the places that look bare.

Another novelty which will please the children is to take the shells of the walnut, split so they will be intact, remove the meats, gild or silver the empty shells, then place a tiny doll, candy or motto inside, and tie with a bright colored baby ribbon.

It is almost impossible to have too many objects for trimmings, as the tree is like a yawning chasm—hard to fill.

Little Chinamen, dangling by their queues, and Japanese lads and lassies, peering furtively out from among green boughs, will create a great deal of amusement for the Occidental boys and girls whose eyes are eagerly fixed on the tree. Milkmaids, Jack Horners, brownies, gnomes and fairies will also be an attraction, and they may serve as bonbon receptacles as well.—'Indiana News.'

Expiring Subscriptions.

Would each subscriber kindly look at the address tag on this paper? If the date thereon is Dec., it is time that the renewals were sent in so as to avoid losing a single copy. As renewals always date from the expiry of the old subscriptions, subscribers lose nothing by remitting a little in advance.

Prizes Easily Earned.

The result of the eighth week's competition in the gold competition is announced in this issue. It would appear that the boys and girls do not realize what an opportunity is open to them to secure $200.00 in gold, or at least one of the weekly prizes of either $10.00 or $5.00, which are offered up to Dec. 24.

Any one reading the following statement carefully will see how easily people are earning these cash prizes.

The first one to start in any town or village has of course the best chance. The best lists so far are coming from villages,

The first week of the competition the two prize winners sent us altogether only $22.85

And they received as commission	$18.03
And " " " Prizes....	$15.00
	$33.03

Another week in this competition the two prize winners sent us altogether only $8.85.

And they received as commission	$1,86
And " " " Prizes....	$15.00
	$16.86

The lists sent in are wofully small as yet. This is bad for us, but it makes it all the more easy for you to win the prizes.

Why don't you try? Even if you live in a small village you could easily beat the **largest** list yet. Remember, that these prizes have been secured by lists amounting to only $6.00 and $2.35 respectively. All the prizes so far, except one, have been secured by those living in villages.

We are giving these cash prizes, one of $10 and one of $5, every week until Christmas, in **addition** to our very liberal commissions, which alone are enough to make canvassing for the 'Witness,' 'World Wide' and 'Northern Messenger' a very profitable occupation for your spare time.

Besides, there is that prize of $200 coming next spring to the one sending the largest amount of subscription money (except Sunday School clubs for 'Northern Messenger') before that date. Everything you send in now counts towards that prize, besides giving you the chance of one of the weekly prizes.

Try your neighbors. They will appreciate our publications as much as you do.

The following are the successful competitors in the gold competition for the week ending December 10.

Last Week's Prize Winners.

First Prize—$10.00 to Malcolm Beaton, Ontario, who, besides the prize, earns $11.29 as commission, making $21.29 profit on his week's work.

Second Prize—$5.00 to Thomas D. Frood, Ontario, aged only eleven years, who, besides the prizes, earns $8.45 as commission, making $13.45 profit on his week's work.

The lists must be marked "Gold Competition."

These Prizes are despatched each Monday.

Full particulars of the competition will be sent on application.

A Christmas Journey.

It was a sad day in the Layton house, though it was Christmas Eve, for had not Papa and Mamma gone off that very morning to Grandpa Layton's to see the dear Grandma who was very, very ill?

Nurse Brown did all she could to cheer up the doleful four, Tom

and Alice, Harold and little Bess, but the tears would come.

They were rich, these children, for they had two grandpas and two grandmas, and Grandpa and Grandma Norris had planned a surprise for their four little pets. Already they were whirling along in the train with the seat opposite them piled high with packages, and boxes and bundles on the floor at their feet.

Just at dark the conductor shouted 'Denbigh' and before long the Layton door bell gave a joyful peal. Four solemn little faces burst into happy smiles, and four merry tongues gaily chattered away, while busy fingers untied those lovely bundles.

When Papa and Mamma came home in a day or two with the glad news that Grandma Layton was better, they found a very happy group round the fire, and were as much surprised and as pleased as the children had been at the unexpected guests—For the 'Messenger'

Such a Mistake.

Donny reached up every minute or two to feel for it and squeeze the toe gently. He was waiting for it to get light enough to take it down—and then!—a subdued whistle issued from the little bundle of pink and white nightgown and boy.

Slowly the room grew a little less dark—a little light, then light enough. Donny, on his bare little tiptoes, took down his stocking. O—O—O—O! It was pretty full, but not so bulgy, quite, as he expected. It looked a little queer.

There was a whole row of stockings—papa's and mamma's, and Ben's, and even Grandma's white knitted one. Papa had borrowed one of Donny's because his was too short to get his share into, he said.

Donny put his hand in and pulled out—why, kind of funny things. They were very nice, but they were kind of different. He tried to whistle again, and not be disappointed. What made him expect he was going to have, certain sure, an air gun and a four blader jackknife and colored crayons and a tiny silver cornet? He missed the cornet the most. He'd already asked Spence Copeland to teach him how to play on it.

He went on pulling the queer things out of the stocking—the paper weight, the silk handkerchief, the gold cuff-buttons, the dainty little white and gold book with 'L-o-n-g, long, f-e-ll-o-w, fellow, on the cover, and last of all the gloves. They were kid, lined with soft fleece, and had fur round the wrist, lots of it. Donny tried them on-Oh! Oh! Donny knew all about it then. The gloves told him.

He hurried over to Papa's stocking and inspected it closely. It was all knobby and beautiful, and peeping out of the top was something silver and shiny, like a little cornet. The knob in the toe felt like a jack knife, and the long, stiff thing in the leg might—just might, you know—be part of the air-gun!

But that was Papa's stocking, it

Donny did wear it 'week-days' and Donny didn't consider Christmas a week-day. It was the stocking papa hung up himself, and so it belonged to papa. Santa Claus had made a terrible mistake, but there was no help for it now.

Donny went back to his stocking, and packed the queer presents neatly back into it. He thought he would go to bed. He felt cold a kind of. But just then papa came in. 'Wish you Merry Christmas, Donny!' he cried, gaily.

'W-wish you M-merry Christmas!' Donny piped bravely.

Now we'll see what old Santa's been stuffing into my —— why!' Then papa whistled and looked across at Donny.

'Here's a cornet, and a gun, and a top, and a jack-knife! What did you get, Donny?'

For fully two minutes Papa played with his presents, then he made a wry face and said:

'Say, now will you swap, Don?'

Donny's face beamed and even the little pink-and-white nightgown trembled with joy.

'Oh, truly?' he stammered eagerly, 'I—I'll swap even!'

It's a trade!' cried papa, and so, after all, Santa Claus's mistake came out right.

Donny played a triumphant tune on the toy cornet, and he and Papa danced to it together.—Constance Hamilton, in 'Youth's Companion.'

Santa Claus.

Now clear in the still air
  The merry bells chime,
They hail with their clangor
  The bright Christmas time,
They tinkle in laughter
  With sweet merry notes,
And clang in their joy
  With their deep brazen throats.

The world is asleep,
  While the bells chime in tune,
The little stars wink
  At the pallid-faced moon,
All nature is sleeping,
  When hark! what is that?
Feet pattering, bells jingling,
  It can't be the cat!

Now softly, pray listen,
  I hear on the roof
A trembling of bells,
  And the stamp of a hoof,
Hurrah for old Santy!
  I hear him, don't you?
He's fast in the chimney,
  I hope he'll get through.

Down, down on the hearthstone
  He comes with a bound,
'Quite a squeeze' chuckles Santy,
  And looks all around.
Then fills every stocking
  With gifts from his pack,
And laughing with glee,
  Up the chimney goes back.

Now, sharp in the air,
  Comes the snap of the whip,
O'er the shingles above me,
  I hear his steeds skip;
Far out on the brisk air,
  His merry laugh swells
And ripples in music
  With tinkling of bells.

And so he goes on,
  And far, far does he roam,
To gladden each heart,
  And to cheer every home;
The children all love him,
  The merry old wight,
His heart is a boy's,
  Though his beard is so white.

Hurrah for old Santy!
  The jolly old chap,
I hope he'll ne'er meet
  With another mishap:
Hurrah for the bells,
  And their glad, merry chime!
Hurrah for roast turkey,
  And bright Christmas-time!
—'Western Teacher.'

A Bit of Christmas Folly.

(By Ada Carleton, in 'Youth's Companion.')

'I want to,' said Molly, with tears in her brown eyes.

'Nonsense?' said mamma.

'Nonsense!' repeated Aunt Julia, emphatically. 'I don't see what puts such ideas in the child's head.'

Molly went to the window and looked out again. There were one, two, three—yes, four cats—a black and white, a maltese, a gray and white, and one wee, jet-black kitten, all looking so forlorn and dejected. Molly glanced around at her own pet kitten cuddled in the rocking-chair before the fire, and sighed.

'I want to,' she said again. 'I'd rather than anything else. I'd go without a single present if I only could, mamma. They're such pitiful objects, without any homes or anybody to love and pet them!'

'That isn't your lookout,' said Aunt Julia. 'Let other people take care of their own cats.'

'But these haven't got any people,' persisted Molly, her red lip grieved and drooping. 'They're stray ones. And I'm their people as much as anyone, Auntie Ju, because I belong to the Band of Mercy. And I can't bear to think they won't have any Christmas at all, poor things. Oh, dear! I don't see why God makes so many cats.'

'But we can't feed them, dear,' said mamma, pitying the little girl's real distress. 'We should have the back yard full all the time.'

'So it is, any way,' urged Molly, eagerly, beginning to catch a ray of comfort. 'And it would only be for once. O mamma, can't I?'

'Wait till to-morrow—' said mamma, and what more she might have said will never be known, for at that moment Uncle Van pushed the portiere aside. He had been in the sitting-room trying to get a nap.

'Might get more sleep in a sawmill,' he grumbled, laughingly. 'Come and help me put on my overcoat, Patty Periwinkle.'

When Molly danced back from the hall a few minutes later her face was shining with pleasure. She sat down demurely to her work of finishing a Christmas 'clean shave' for papa, but more than once she burst into a soft little fit of laughter at nothing at all.

There was a great deal of whispering going on between Uncle Van and Molly that afternoon, and a good part of the time was spent in the basement storeroom.

'Van humors that child to death,' said Aunt Julia. 'I wonder what they're up to now!'

She knew next morning. Promptly at eight o'clock, when everybody was saying 'Merry Christmas!' to everybody else, a breezy call rang through the house:

'O mamma, papa, Auntie Ju—everybody! Come quick—see what's in the back yard!'

There was a grand rush to the windows. 'I declare!' cried Aunt Julia, who was the first to find her voice; 'I should say—cats!'

(To be continued.)

God Speed the Cause.

(L. J. Penny, in the 'National Advocate.')

God speed the cause we advocate!
  Oh, may He hear our prayer!
May it increase a thousand fold!
  May the old, the, young, the fair,
The high, the low, the rich, the poor,
  Wher'er the wine-cup flows,
    Join heart and hand
  To free our land
  From drink's ten thousand woes.

Our cause is Heaven's; the war is God's,
  And angels watch the fight.
It may be long, it may be strong,
  But on our side is Right.
Then onward! hopeful, earnest hearts;
  We cannot fail to win;
    On, on to save
    From early grave
  Our drink-enfettered kin.

What though the march to victory seem
  A slow, a weary one,
Still let our war-cry ever be
  'On, Temperance workers, on!'
Oh, falter not; the work is worth
  That Heaven we all would gain;
    What's well begun
    Is half way done,
  Now join my last refrain.

Christmas Cookery Without Brandy.

There was a mother who had not learned the danger of using wine and brandy in her cooking. A gentleman was taking dinner with the family, so the pudding sauce had what she felt the necessary quantity of wine in it. A dear little boy, who still lisped, sat at the table, and at last he asked, 'Mamma, what ith thith thauth made of? Is taathteth very, very good.' The mother replied, 'Butter and sugar,' thinking that enough information for the child. He tasted it again and asked, 'What elth ith it made of? I can tathe thsomething elth.' The gentleman gave a laughing look across the table, as much as to say to the mother, 'You are cornered now; I wonder how you will get out.' She then mentioned the different spices, leaving out the wine. The child said again, 'It ith very good,' and after a few moments' silence he added, 'Mamma, are you not glad we are not the kind of folkth that eat whithky?' All at the table except the mother just laughed, but the question of the little man went home to her heart. She resolved that her boy should never learn to like the taste of wine at the home table. From that time no drop of anything intoxicating was used in her cooking. The boy grew up to be a strong, intellectual abstainer.—Exchange.

A Bar.

Charles Raymond, a writer in the Toronto 'Daily Star,' gives the following on the bar:

I stood before a door and read upon it in gilded letters the one word 'Bar.' As I read a man pushed open the door, and, staggering out, fell upon his face on the pavement. When he rose a thin red stream trickled down his cheek. He fumbled for his handkerchief, and the blood stained it, and dyed his hands. It was the blood of a sacrifice offered up at the shrine of the bar.

A Bar! Yes, well named, a bar to happiness, for what happiness is there in a mind that is distorted, and a face that is bloody?

A Bar! Yes, to good society, who wants a drunken man? He is not welcome at the theatre, club or concert. He is a nuisance as he reels the streets; he is a trouble at his own home.

A Bar! Yes, drunken men there is a bar against you in the very hotel where you bought the liquor and became drunk. You are not wanted there, for you are a bad advertisement, for who is the hotel man who will point to you and say: 'That is my make.' 'That is my customer.' 'That is a product of my brand?'

A Bar! Well named, well, put, short, pithy and to the point, b-a-r. Bar to a position of trust, to an increase of power, to a fuller confidence of the employer, a better using of time. A bar to good, to the white life, to the strong life and to the well rounded character.

A Bar! Yes, see it, the bottles behind, the rail in front, and the row of worshippers offering themselves soul and body at the shrine.

A Bar! Yes, a bar to decency, to right judgment.

A Bar! The rent is behind, the grocer is unpaid, and the money is blown, but what odds, 'Have another.'

A Bar! Yes, to all that makes for man's best interest and the development of his higher nature, to that character that is the only thing that will stand the wrench of time.

A Bar! How short, terse and expressive. Yes, but not a bar to a woe on earth and woe hereafter.—'Canadian Royal Templar.'

'Respectable Rum Seller.'

Might as well say respectable murderer. For the rum seller deals out to the drunkards the 'distilled perdition' that causes murders, ruins families, fills almshouses, jails and penitentiaries, and makes merchandise of the souls of the victims. Respectable rum seller! There is no such thing as respectability about a traffic that ruins both soul and body, and causes more than half the crimes which are committed. Too much cannot be said or done against it. It is high time that the prominent business men awake from their carelessness in this matter, and see to it, that they never go into the devil's recruiting offices (saloons), for when they do, they seem to say by their example, that the rum seller is respectable; and their example is mighty for good or for evil. How can they stand aloof while their neighbors, and even their sons are being ruined by strong drink? How can they stand idly by, without even making an effort to save them, excusing themselves as does the rum seller, by saying, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' God says, not that the rum seller is respectable, but 'Woe unto him that putteth the cup to his neighbor's lips, to make him drunken with strong drink.' Let us say by our example as well as by our precept, total abstinence, now and forever; and may God hasten the day when no one shall say, 'respectable rum seller.'—'Zion's Watchman.'

Which Shall it Be?

A tidy home for Betsy and me,
With just enough room for one, two, three?
Or a tumble-down hut with a broken gate,
And a sad-eyed woman toiling early and late:
  Which shall it be
  For mine and me?

A five-cent glass of beer for me,
Or a five-cent loaf for all of us three?
Beer or baby—wine or wife—
Which do I hold more precious than life?
  Which shall it be
  For mine and me?

—'Forward.'

There are people who keep their horses in the stall, their cattle in the yard, and their hogs in the pen, but their young folks run wild. Take as good care of your children as you do of your live stock, especially of nights. —Lauren Dillon.

Our Richest Heritage.

Our PEOPLE are our richest heritage. Yet we are losing, and have been, for a century, many of our brightest and best as the result of the liquor traffic. Mr. Bok, of the 'Ladies' Home Journal,' lately told of a well-known writer, who had often received $100 for a single article for a review, who came into his office begging for any kind of work. He was ruined by drink, and is now addressing wrappers in a cellar at $1 per 1,000. And this, alas! only one case in a thousand.—Exchange.

The Wedding Ring's Story.

(John Rhodes, C.M., in the 'Temperance Leader and League Journal.')

(Concluded.)

He asked if he might read to them from a very favorite book of his he always carried with him. They consented, thinking it would be some book of poetry perhaps. It was a little pocket Bible, and there was poetry in it; for he read to them Psalm xci., and my master and mistress felt they had never heard such soul-stirring words. Then he read a few verses from St. John's Gospel, chapter iii.—of God so loving the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believed on him might be saved from sin and death, and have everlasting life. Then they knelt down, and Robson prayed. Oh! the joy and peace that fell on the three of them on that memorable evening.

The next day Fred and Alice talked together earnestly and prayerfully of their previous evening's experiences, and both resolved that, by God's help, they would lead a new life.

'What about the drink?' asked Alice.

'Well,' replied Fred, 'I have been thinking of that. You notice Robson wears a bit of blue ribbon; that is to show that he is a total abstainer. Now I used to think and say that that bit of ribbon meant that a man had given up his liberty, his free will, his manliness. I used to think I never would sign a pledge, or do anything else like that, but now I see it is the drinker who is the slave, who has no free will, no manliness; so I have made up my mind that I'll sign the pledge, and, by God's help, never touch strong drink ever again.'

'Oh, thank God for that,' my mistress exclaimed, 'and I'll do the same. What shall we do with the wine, ale, and spirits we have in the house?'

'There is nothing else for us to do with it,' said Fred, 'but pour it down the sink; for if we feel it is a danger to us we must not give it to others, even if it does seem like waste.'

'Never mind what it cost,' said Alice; 'it shall go down this moment.'

'What about the racing and betting, Fred, dear?' asked Alice.

'My dear wife,' said he, 'they are done with also. What a blessing it has been that my eyes have been opened. Do you know what started me thinking of these things?'

'No!' replied my mistress.

'It was you reading that short story to me when I was so ill after one of my drinking turns. Yet I tried to stifle the thoughts, and Girling was always ready to chaff me and take me off for a drink.'

'What about him now?' asked Alice.

'As far as racing, betting and drinking go, I've completely done with him, and am going to make Robson my companion.'

My master left his sick room a changed man. I heard him tell his dear wife that the first thing he did on reaching the office was to thank Robson for his blessed help; then, in a few words he summed up his new position to Girling. That worthy sneered at him, asked if he intended becoming another milksop like Robson, and that Fred had replied: 'Ah! Girling, I shall be glad if I can only approach to something of Robson's goodness, and do for you what he has done for me.'

Days and weeks have changed into years. I notice that my master and mistress and their bonnie daughter seem to grow nearer and dearer to each other. There was no more theatre going, no more drink was brought into their house, nor did they touch any anywhere else.

They both joined that noble body of workers in the temperance cause—the Band of Hope, and are sharing in its glorious work of reformation and uplifting.

Many times does my mistress say to her husband, 'What a dear husband you are!' And need I say that he has ready a similar compliment to pay his wife.

I can look forward to the rest of their lives passing on so happily; and shall never regret being their wedding ring.—'The Band of Hope Chronicle.'

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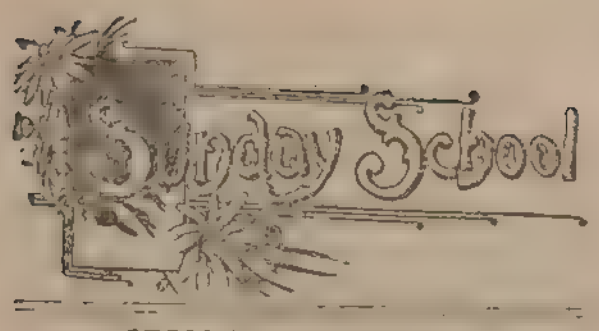

LESSON I.—JANUARY 1.

Christ the Life and Light of Man.

John i., 1-18.

Golden Text.

In him was life: and the life was the light of men. John i., 4.

Home Readings.

Monday, Dec. 26.—John i., 1-18.
Tuesday, Dec. 27.—John viii., 12-20.
Wednesday, Dec. 28.—John xxii., 23-37
Thursday, Dec. 29.—John xiv., 1-1.
Friday, Dec. 30.—Ps. xxxiv., 8-19.
Saturday, Dec. 31.—Rev. xix., 6-16.
Sunday, Jan. 1.—Rev. xxi., 22-xxii., 5.

(By R. M. Kurtz.)

INTRODUCTION.

After another six months in the study of Jewish history we return to the New Testament and take up the great Gospel of John. This Gospel is one of the most important of all the books of the Bible. Indeed, Dr. Torrey has said that, were he to be given the choice of but one book in the Bible, being prevented from ever having any other, he would take John's Gospel.

The Apostle John was a Galilean fisherman, who was called from his work to follow Christ (Matthew iv., 21). According to tradition he was a cousin of Christ. He has been described as the 'most intimate earthly friend' of Jesus. In addition to the Gospel bearing his name he is credited with three epistles and Revelation. According to early church history, John lived to extreme old age, being ninety or over when he died. His later ministry seems to have been at Ephesus, and there he was buried. In his character he combined gentleness and strength.

The Gospel of John was written probably at Ephesus, and in the latter part of the writer's life. Matthew wrote more especially with reference to the Jews; Mark, with reference to the Romans; Luke, with reference to the Greeks; but John wrote for Christians generally. By the time his Gospel was written, doubts and misunderstandings had had opportunity to enter the church, so that John's Gospel came as a clear presentation of Christ as the Son of God and Saviour of men.

In this connection we are glad to avail ourselves of a synopsis of John's Gospel, presented last summer at Ocean Grove by Dr. W. J. Erdman, who says:

'The prologue consists of 18 verses: the epilogue of chapter xxi. Between them lies the body of the Gospel. This is divided into four parts, and over them in turn may be written as titles the four clauses of xvi., 28.

'Over part first, i., 19-ii., 11, write the clause: "I came forth from the Father;" he is not yet "in the world" in the technical use of that word in John, but in private with his disciples.

'Over part second, ii., 12-xii., 50, write "And am come into the world," for this contains his public ministry.

'Over part third, 13-17, write, "Again, I leave the world," for it is with this thought this third part opens. "Jesus knowing his hour had come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father. . . . Jesus knowing that he came forth from God and was going to God," washes the disciples' feet.

'Over the fourth part write, 'And go to the Father," for the first word spoken by him at the conclusion of his fulfilment of ancient type and prediction at the end of that brief arc of his progress which passed through death and under the world unto resurrection was that to Mary, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended unto the Father, but go unto my brethren and say to them, I ascend unto my Father and your father, and to my God and your God."

'The movement through that vast mysterious circle from God to God was finished. Even over the prologue, which is a miniature of the Gospel, can be written the words: "From God to God," and over the epilogue the words, "If I will," xxi., 23, for therein we learn how out of the unseen Holy Place Jesus is evermore guiding and allotting in service, suffering, and waiting until he come.'

THE WORD.

1. 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2. 'The same was in the beginning with God.

3. 'All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.'

We might discover that John was going to deal with the divinity of Christ by the opening verse. When we take up the origin of things we turn to God. As in the opening verse of the Old Testament, giving the account of creation, so here, we commence with the words, 'In the beginning.' We are not dealing with a man, but with God come to earth in man's form, and John refers at the outset to his relation to the created universe.

The term 'Word,' as here used with reference to Christ, means 'not only the spoken word, but the thought expressed by the spoken word.' It conveys the thought of the will and purpose of God as represented in Christ.

We see by verses 2 and 3 that Christ is coeternal with God. All creation was the work of God, Father and Son. In these three opening verses see what a picture of Christ John has presented. He is not an exalted creature, but himself Creator; he has not had a beginning of existence, as men have, but is eternal. In short, he that hath seen Christ hath seen the Father.'

LIFE AND LIGHT IN HIM.

4. 'In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

5. 'And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.'

Again we are reminded of the account of creation by the reference to light. What is life without light? This infinite being whom John is introducing to us is the author of both. John is preparing to present Christ as the Saviour of men, but who else can save men than the author of their existence?

But the darkness did not comprehend the light, and was not immediately banished by it. The struggle between the forces of light and darkness still continues.

THE WITNESS OF THE LIGHT.

6. 'There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

7. 'The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

8. 'He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.'

This is a Gospel of witnesses, the word witness occurring forty-seven times. The first witness to Christ, the Light of the world, mentioned by John the Apostle, is John the Baptist, Christ's forerunner. John came to prepare the people for Christ's appearance, and was by some mistaken for the Messiah himself. Luke says, concerning the effect of John the Baptist's preaching, that 'all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not.'

Not only did John the Baptist seek to correct this idea, but now the Apostle John calls our attention to the distinction between John the Baptist, the witness of the Light, and Christ himself, the Light.

THE WORLD'S RECEPTION OF CHRIST.

9. 'That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

10. 'He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11. 'He came unto his own, and his own received him not.'

Here the writer goes back to the thought expressed above, of the light shining in darkness, but not being comprehended by the darkness. Christ the true Light and Creator of the world, came into the world, but it did not know nor receive him. He not only came to his world, but to his chosen race, but it received him not.

WHAT OF THOSE WHO DID RECEIVE HIM?

12. 'But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

13. 'Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

14. 'And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.'

The eighteen verses of this lesson contain in outline the principles of the Gospel of the Christ. First, we have the setting forth of the divinity of Christ; second, his relation to creation as the source of life and light; third, his advent into the word and its rejection of him; fourth, the relation of Christ to those who do believe on him.

The world as such, and the Jewish race as such, rejected and slew Christ; yet there were and are multitudes of individuals who have believed and obeyed him. Notice the wording of verse 12. Men do not become sons of God by simply deciding to be such, by any virtue or accomplishment of their own. It is because Christ in whom they believe gives them this power. 'By grace are ye saved.' Men are born of God into his kingdom.

John beautifully speaks of Christ's life on earth when he says, 'And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.' The word here translated dwelt is in the original 'tented.' The thought is that Christ came down and camped with men in their wearisome journey through life, just as the Presence of God was in the tabernacle when the Israelites were journeying toward Canaan.

And this glory of Christ John says 'we beheld.' Doubtless he is recalling the Transfiguration when he, with Peter and James, saw the glorified Jesus, and heard the voice from the cloud saying, 'This is my beloved Son.'

THE TESTIMONY OF JOHN AND OF BELIEVERS.

15. John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake. He that cometh after me is preferred before me, for he was before me.

16. 'And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

17. 'For the Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.'

John the Baptist bore his testimony, which John now quotes, after having already referred to it. Then, in verse 16, he reminds his readers that they also have themselves the evidence of Christ's divinity, having received of his fulness and grace. 'Grace for grace' may mean grace upon grace, or grace to increase grace.

In verse 17 the Apostle draws a clearer distinction between the Law and grace. The Law was given through Moses, but only the Son of God could bring men into communion with God and confer his grace upon them.

CHRIST THE REVEALER OF THE FATHER.

18. 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.'

Moses, a man, might be the bearer of the Law of God to men, but no man could reveal God himself, for no man has seen him; hence none but the only begotten Son of God can declare him to us. This Christ does. Coming to earth and becoming a man among men, while still divine, he links the divine and human in himself, and reveals the Father to the race.

The lesson for January 8, is, 'The Witness of John the Baptist to Jesus.' John i., 19-34.

C. E. Topic.

Sunday, Jan. 1, 1905.—Topic—Our goals for 1905. Phil. iii., 12-16. (Consecration meeting.)

Junior C. E. Topic.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

Monday, Dec. 26.—The desert of Sinai. Ex. xix., 1, 2.

Tuesday, Dec. 27.—God's word to Moses. Ex. xix., 3-6.

Wednesday, Dec. 28.—What the people said. Ex. xix., 7, 8.

Thursday, Dec. 29.—The Lord on Mt. Sinai. Ex. xix., 9-13.

Friday, Dec. 30.—'Lest thou forget.' Deut. iv., 9-13.

Saturday, Dec. 31.—God's desire for us. Deut. v., 29.

Sunday, Jan. 1.—Topic—How and why God gave the commandments. Ex. xix., 16-25; Deut. vi., 1, 2.

Correspondence

OUR BIRTHDAY BOOK.

DECEMBER.

1.
They shall see the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God. Isa. xxxv., 2.

2.
As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Isa. xxxii., 2.

3.
Be strong, fear not. . . . He will come and save you. Isa. xxxv., 4.
Mabel L. H.

4.
We have waited for him and he will save us. Isa. xxv., 9.

5.
Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow. Isa. i., 18.

6.
In his love and his pity he redeemed them. Isa. lxiii., 9.

7.
He bare the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors. Isa. liii., 12.

8.
He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Isa. liii., 4.
Dochie Pearce.

9.
He was their Saviour. Isa. lxiii., 8.

10.
The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light and thy God thy glory. Isa. lx., 19.
Elizabeth W. Read.

11.
O Lord thou wilt ordain peace for us; for thou also hast wrought all our works in us. Isa. xxvi., 12.

12.
The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord. Isa. xxix., 19.

13.
Let him take hold of my strength. Isa. xxvii., 5.

14.
Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters. Isa. lv., 1.

15.
I will pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. Isa. xliv., 3.

16.
The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Isa. xi., 10.

17.
Behold, God is my salvation. I will trust and not be afraid. Isa. xii., 2.
Bertie P. McG., Jennie McNayer.

18.
I also will give thee (Christ) for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth. Isa. xlix., 6.

19.
He shall feed his flock like a shepherd. Isa. xlix., 11.
Simon A. Campbell, Bessie P. Wiley, Iva L. Thomas.

20.
He shall gather the lambs with his arm and carry them in his bosom. Isa. xl., 11.

21.
As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you. lxvi., 13.
Sarah E. Zwicker, Gertie Dand.

22.
Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Isa. lv., 6.

23.
I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions. Isa. xliii., 25.
Harris Zwicker, Hattie Zwicker, Nessie Rea Patterson, Bessie Ogilvy.

24.
His (Christ's) name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Isa. ix., 6.
Annie May Rutter, Lena Porter.

25.
Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God. Isa. iv., 9.
J. McCaskill, Florence Long.

26.
Call the Sabbath a delight. Isa. lviii., 13.
D. J. Bradley.

27.
Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole world is full of his glory. Isa. vi., 3.
Berta C. Forbes, Morton Hall, William E. Simpson.

28.
Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. Isa. xxvi., 4.
Eleanor F. Millar.

29.
He will swallow up death in victory. Isa. xxv., 8.
Alice Porter.

30.
The Lord shall guide thee continually. Isa. lviii., 11.
Ella Pardy.

31
The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever. Isa. xl., 8.
Lula T. M., William A. Duncan.

Lion's Head, Ont.

Dear Editor,—This is my first letter to the 'Messenger.' I have been going to the Presbyterian Sunday-school for about seven years, and have taken the 'Messenger' right along. This place is very nice in the summer time. There is a great deal of sport, although most of the people down in the country think that it is a wild and backward place. The scenery is so beautiful along the bay. We had a school concert here on Thanksgiving day and had a very pleasant time. There are two rooms in the schoolhouse, junior room and senior room. I am in the senior fourth class, and will be trying the entrance next mid-summer. There are two blacksmith shops here. My father is a blacksmith, and has a shop. I have two brothers and two sisters. They have been taking the 'Messenger' for quite a long time, too.

IVAN B. (aged 12 years).

Snow Road, Ont.

Dear Editor,—I saw a note in one of the papers asking us to tell what we had been doing in our holidays. In my holidays I went to a place called Braside. I stayed there about a week. While I was there I saw the Ottawa river and three or four steamboats and one ferry boat. While I was there my Uncle George got a boat, and after he got fixed he took Aunt Sarah and all my cousins, but one, out for a sail on the Ottawa river. There is a big mill at Braside, and I was through it when it was going, and when it was not going. There was a social while I was there, and I went to it and had a fine time. The people were expecting the brass bands, but something happened, and they were not there. The next day I had to go home. My aunt and one of my cousins came home with me. When we got to my home we went to a picnic and had a good time. There were games of baseball and football, but we did not stay to see the football. After we had seen the baseball we got our supper and went home. Then in a few days we all went to my Uncle Dunck's. We stayed there till about four o'clock, and then we went home. Aunt Sarah and my cousin stayed down there. I hope soon to see a letter from my cousin in Braside. I think that Minnie E. M.'s letter was very interesting, and I hope that she will write another one. I think it was very kind to put in the 'Messenger' how to make things, and I think that they are very nice things, too. I have already made some of them, and think they look very nice. If any other little girl has not seen them and would like to, I will tell where they are in the paper, Nov. 18, page six.

STELLA MAY W. (aged 10).

South Bay.

Dear Editor,—I thought I would write another letter to the 'Messenger.' I like the paper very much. I do not get time to read them all, so I have got a lot over to read. I think maybe I can answer the question that Minnie E. M. asked, and she referred to the Book of Esther. HERBERT EARL C.

P.S.—Will C. H. D., Los Flores, South America, please write.—H. E. C.

Montreal, Que.

Dear Editor,—We have been taking the 'Messenger' quite a while. I go to Lorne School. I am in the fourth book. I af ten years old. My birthday is on May 25. I have three brothers. Their names are Fred, Richard and Herbert. I have read quite a few books, of which the names are, the 'Bessie' books, 'Marjorie,' 'Grandma's Miracles,' and 'What Katy Did.' EVELYN H.

Stokes Bay, Ont.

Dear Editor,—I am thirteen years old. I have seven brothers and two sisters. I am in the third reader. In the summer I do not go to school, because we live on an island in the summer-time. There are lots of rattle snakes on the island. I can row, and I go out in the boat when it is fine weather. I live two miles from Stokes Bay, which is our post-office. It is only a very small place. KATIE McK.

Moose Jaw.

Dear Editor,—My father takes the 'Messenger,' and I like it very much. Our school stopped on Nov. 8. I am in part two. We have five horses and a cow and a moolley calf. I have a cat for a pet; it caught lots of mice in the summer-time, but in the autumn it sleeps a lot; it is asleep now. I was in the city on Monday. I saw an automobile, and it was red There is a coulee near the city. When I go to the city we cross it at a narrow place. They are building a bridge. ETHEL B.

Montreal, Can.

Dear Editor,—I used to live in West Central Africa,—in fact, I was born there. My two sisters are writing to the 'Messenger,' and I thought I would write, too. It is my first letter to the 'Messenger.' We had a mule and an ox in Africa; father used to ride the mule and mother used to ride the ox sometimes, and we children rode the ox, too. One day father took my sister Emma and my little brother Arthur and me out to the villages, and Emma and I rode the ox and Arthur and father rode the mule. The saddle was slipping off the ox, and father got off the mule to put it up, and the reins of the mule slipped out of father's hand, and the mule started to gallop away. Father called out to Arthur to pull the reins and to hold on. The mule did not stop till it got to the gate of the missionaries' houses, and one of the boys caught it there. Arthur got quite a little fright, but did not fall; he was only five years old then. Now, I think I must stop. Perhaps I will write some other day. Please put my name in your birthday book for April 25. I was ten on my last birthday. ESTHER R.

Dobbinton, Ont.

Dear Editor,—As I have never written to the 'Messenger,' I thought I would write now. I live on a farm. We have four horses, six cows. For pets I have a little black kitten, two dolls and a doll's carriage, and a little trunk to put my dolls' clothes in. I make all its clothes myself. I have three sisters and seven brothers, and one sister marrier, and two brothers. Two brothers live in Manitoba, one in Chesley and two at home. I am ten years old. I go to school every day, and I am in the third reader. I like my teacher very well. His name is Mr. H. I also go to Sunday-school, and like my teacher there. My Sunday-school takes the 'Messenger,' and I get it. I like the Little Folks' Page and the Correspondence best.

ELLA C.

Christmas.

'The inn was full at Bethelehem;
A busy crowd were there;
And some were rich and some were wise,
And some were young and fair;
But who or what they were, to-day,
There is not one to care;
But in the cattle's manger
There lay a baby stranger
Soft nestled, like a snow-white dove, among the scented hay;
And, lo! through Him was given
Our song to earth and heaven,
The song two worlds together sing upon a Christmas day;
'Glory to God! Good will to men!
O listen! Wake it once again!
Peace on earth! Good will to men!'

They sing it, those who sang it first;
The angels strong and high;
They sing, in shining white, the saints who died long years gone by,
And all the fluttering cherub throng,
The children of the sky;
They sing, the patient, waiting souls
Who still faith's conflicts know,
They sing, life's happy innocents,
Their faces all aglow,
One melody fills heaven above
And floats o'er earth below,
The song of that sweet stranger,
Who, in the cattle's manger,
Lay, nineteen hundred years ago, among the scented hay!
All sin and wrong forgiven,
Earth seems close kin to heaven,
And sweet two worlds together sing upon a Christmas Day!
—Marian Douglas, in 'Harper's Bazaar.'

Inasmuch.

'Isn't it a terrible day!' exclaimed a friend, as she paused outside the door of the Deaconess Home to shake the clinging snow from her umbrella and clothing.

'Oh, I like a snowstorm,' replied the deaconess as she hurried down the steps. 'Besides, I am always sure to find the people at home, and I know the "shut-ins" need me most on dark days.'

The air was 'hoary with the swarm and the whirl-dance of the blinding storm'; while drifts everywhere, and a strange stillness, broken only by the intermittent, muffled sound of sleigh-bells. Past white mounds of snow, through which a pathway had been tunnelled, the deaconess made her way to a narrow street only a few steps away from one of the busiest thoroughfares of the city. The rising wind began to shriek and moan as she turned a corner, and from the windows of dreary little houses along the way, hungry-looking faces peered out at her in wistful questioning. Rows and rows of these unhomelike dwellings, where poverty and unthrift yawned from broken window-panes and tumble-down doorways, were left behind, when, suddenly, she stopped in front of one much larger than the others, opened the door and quickly ascended a long, dark stairway.

'Come in,' answered a tremulous voice to her repeated knocking. In the gathering gloom, an old lady was painfully groping her way to the door. 'Good afternoon, Mrs. B——; I thought you might be feeling lonely this stormy day!'

'Oh, and so it's you, dear. Do you know, my eyes are getting that bad I can hardly see my hand before my face, but I ought surely to know your voice. I'm right glad to see you, for I'm getting in a bad way again, and can hardly make my bit of porridge in the mornings.'

From under her cape the deaconess drew a small tin pail. 'I've brought you a stewed chicken, and you can warm it over for your supper.'

'Ay, miss; it will do for two or three meals. You are always bringing me something good, and I'm sure it is very kind of you to think of an old body like me. I've not had any meat since the last you brought me.'

'Let me straighten things about for you,' and suiting the action to the word, she brought oil, filled the old kerosene lamp, with some telling strokes put the room in order, replenished the fire in the poor little stove, and made all necessary preparations for the evening meal. She deposited in the wooden box which served as a cupboard a fresh supply of tea, sugar, and oatmeal, then drew up her chair beside her aged friend and opened the well-worn Bible. There was something very touching in the eager, reverent attitude of her listener, who loved the Word of God, but had been deprived of the privilege of reading it for many long months. Slowly and distinctly a chapter full of comfort and hope was read, and in the prayer that followed, a tender touch from the unseen fell upon them both with a holy calm and peace.

'I was 'most tempted to-day to think that God was forgetting me,' said the old lady very humbly, when her visitor rose to go. No chiding needed here, only patient, loving words of sympathy and cheer. The deaconess thought of the sad life history of this lonely woman. The dear home faces long buried out of sight, without companionship, and often face to face with want, what wonder that it seemed hard at times to live on cheerfully with so much of love and life all gone!

'Look up and keep a brave heart,' she called back cheerily from the foot of the stairs, a few minutes later. 'Ay, I'll try, dear, and I thank him for——' but her friend was gone into the storm again, for other hungry hearts were waiting.—'Christian Guardian.'

HOUSEHOLD.

Table Garnishings.

Now just a word or two about Christmas table decorations ;for no matter how simply we live during three hundred and sixty-four days in the year, on this three hundred and sixty-fifth, this feast day of all Christian countries, we desire to mark the feast with some bit of garnishings.

One might enlarge upon the subject of table decorations in general, and show how much of refinement is not merely indicated but inculcated in the family by the presence of the dainty table trifles, but just now we wish to indicate the simple garnishings appropriate for the Christmas dinner.

My country housekeeper of a humble home, who had neither conservatory nor gay satin ribbons, placed at each plate a little spray of cedar, plucked fresh and fragrant from the bush 'down the road,' a few yards of baby ribbon, scarlet, blue, white and pink, costing but a few cents. had been purchased a few days before and was tied into knots at the base of each little spray.

Father's was red, mother's blue, Arthur's pink and whitie baby's white only, these were fastened each on the dress bodice and coat after the dinner and worn for the remainder of the day. A vase of pressed ferns and preserved haw berries stood on the table centre, with a bit of the ribbon knotted about it.

The plum pudding came in with a cedar spray in its steaming centre.

And that was all, yet with freshest of table linen, and a dining-room heavy with sweet-smelling boughs, 'it was real Christmassy,' as Arthur said.

From this simple and costless garnishing, we may go upward to the primrose and chrysanthemum centre-pieces; the roses at each plate; the costly little German Christmas tree that the florist exports; even the rare orchids. We may spend as many dollars as we will, yet for this our mid-winter feast, I am not sure but that my country friend with her very humble means had also the truest art instinct.

Only do not consider the rich food all that is needed; have rather a simple fare with suitable garnishings.—Jean Joy, in the 'Canadian Home Journal.'

Holiday Recipes.

Chestnut Stuffing.—Chestnut stuffing for a turkey is prepared as follows: Drop 25 (or thereabout) large chestnuts in boiling water, and leave them for a few minutes; then take them up and rub off the thin dark skin. After this cover them with boiling water and simmer one hour; then take them up and mash them fine. Mince a pound of veal and half a pound of salt pork very fine. To this add the chestnuts, half a teaspoonful pepper and two tablespoonfuls of salt and a cupful of soup stock or water; then stuff the turkey with this. —Boston 'Herald.'

A Novel Plum Pudding.—An English doctor recommends that to make Christmas puddings more digestible and nutritious, suet should be entirely left out. He advises the following recipe, in which nuts finely ground up in a nut mill take its place:—Ingredients: One pound grated bread crumbs, one pound stoned raisins, one pound currants, one pound sultanas, half a pound sweet almonds blanched, and a few bitter almonds, half a pound pine kernels, half a pound of brown sugar, quarter of a pound of butter, quarter of a pound of shelled Brazil nuts, grated rind of three lemons and six eggs, half a pound candied peel. Finely cut up peel, and pass all the nuts, except the pine kernels, through the nut mill; the latter are to be simply chopped. Rub the butter into the bread crumbs, add the fruit, sugar, grated lemons, and lemon peel, then the eggs well beaten, and mix together. Put into a basin and boil in the usual way for six hours.—Exchange.

Sugared Popcorn.—Make a plain sugar syrup, and boil until it will candy in cold water. A cup full of sugar is enough for three quarts of popped corn. Mix the corn quickly with the syrup seeing that every kernel gets its share. Sprinkle a part with colored sugar before it cools.

Popcorn Balls.—For this purpose the corn must be carefully popped and sorted, and all the bad kernels removed. It may be chopped

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THE ROYAL ACADEMY
PUBLISHING COMPANY,
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fine or the fluffy kernels may be left as they are. The same syrup may be used as for sugared corn, but less corn must be used as it will require a greater proportion of syrup to hold the balls together than when each kernel is separate. If the corn is warm the syrup does not cool so quickly and the balls will retain their shape better. When the corn is chopped fine and mixed with the syrups it may be packed in buttered pans forming either cakes or bars. Syrup of any flavor or color may be used, and chopped nuts or grated cocoanut mixed with the corn.

Old-Fashioned Pound Cake.—The old rule for the pound cake of our grandmothers—and there is none better—calls for one pound each of butter, sugar and flour, and ten eggs. Beat the butter to a cream and add the sugar little by little, stirring all the while. Beat the eggs without separating until they become light and foamy. Add gradually to the butter and sugar and beat hard. Sift in the flour already once or twice sifted, and add the flavoring. Line the cake pans with buttered paper and pour in the well-beaten mixture. Bake in a moderate, steady oven.

This recipe may be varied, by the addition of raisins, seeded and cut in halves, shredded citron or almonds, blanched and pounded in rose water. Some old-fashioned housekeepers always add a quarter of a teaspoon of mace.

This same mixture may be baked in patty tins, putting currants in some, almonds or raisins into the rest. Pound cake is apt to be lighter baked in this way. The cakes may be left plain or frosted. If kept in stone ars, they will grow richer with the keeping. Old time housekeepers used to keep an apple in the jar with their pound cake, thinking it tended to keep the cake moist.—'Presbyterian.'

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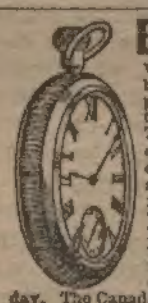

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